Rooster Comb Fire

EMERGENCY STABILIZATION PLAN

USDI-BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
VALE DISTRICT
OREGON/WASHINGTON STATE OFFICE

FIRE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fire Name	Rooster Comb
Fire Number	M738
District/Field Office	Vale/Malheur
Admin Number	OR 034
State	Oregon
County(s)	Malheur
Ignition Date/Cause	August 19, 2003 / Lightning
Date Controlled	August 22, 2003
Jurisdiction	*Acres*
BLM/BOR	3,659
State	
Private	
Other	
Total Acres	3,659
Total Costs	$42,000

Type of Action (check one box below)

X	Initial Submission
	Updating or Revising the Initial Submission
	Amendment

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Rooster Comb (M738) Emergency Stabilization Plan

PART 1. – REVIEW, APPROVALS, and PREPARERS

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

I. EMERGENCY STABILIZATION PLAN APPROVAL

_____ Approved

_____ Approved with Revision

_____ Disapproved

(Signature pending 30 day comment for actions proposed within WSA)

FIELD / DISTRICT MANAGER **Date**

II. FUNDING APPROVAL. For FY2003, all ES Plans must be approved by the National Coordinator. This may change in the future. Funding for emergency stabilization plans are approved through a memo from the approving office.

III. EMERGENCY STABILIZATION TEAM MEMBERS

Position	Team Member (Agency/Office)	Initial and Date
Team Leader	Steve Christensen	9/15/03
Operations	N/A	
NEPA Compliance & Planning	Tom Hilken	
Botanist	Jean Findley	9/15/03
Weeds	Lynne Silva	9/15/03
Soil Scientist/Hydrolgist	Shaney Rockefeller	9/15/03
Cultural Resources/Archeologist	Diane Pritchard	9/15/03
Rangeland Mgt. Specialist	Steve Christensen	9/21/03
Wildlife Biologist	Al Bamman	9/15/03
GIS Specialist	N/A	
Recreation/Wilderness	Bob Alward	9/18/03
Resource Advisor(s) on Fire	Steve Christensen	9/15/03

PART 2. - EMERGENCY STABILIZATION COST SUMMARY TABLE

Emergency stabilization activities are funded from fire suppression funds and must be completed within 1 year of the date of control of the fire. Monitoring is planned for 3 years of date of fire control. Results of monitoring will be the basis for determining any needed re-treatments and must be requested for programming into the AWP.

Spec #	Title	Unit	Unit Cost	# of Units	Cost	Implementation Method	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	Total
S-1	Planning\Design Specifications	acres	NA	3,659	$5,000	BLM staff	$5,000			
S-2	Drill Seeding	acres			-0-					
S-3	Aerial Seeding	acres			-0-					
S-4	Seedling Planting	each			-0-					
S-5	Noxious Weeds	acres		3,659	$1,000	BLM staff	$1,000			
S-6	Protective Fencing	miles	$4000	8	$32,000	Contract / BLM staff	$32,000			
S-7	Cattleguard	each			-0-					
S-8	Herbicide Application	acres			-0-					
S-9	Soil Stabilization	each			-0-					
S-10	Monitoring Years 1, 2, & 3	acres	NA		$4,000	Contract / BLM staff	$2,000	$1,000	$1,000	$4,000
S-11	Other				-0-					
TOTAL COST					$42,000		$40,000	$1,000	$1,000	

PART 3. – EMERGENCY STABILIZATION CONCERNS, DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE OF TREATMENTS

I. CONCERNS

1) Vegetation: Native Perennial Bunchgrass impacted by the 3,659 acre fire need protection from grazing impacts for a minimum of two growing seasons to recover vigor.
2) Livestock: Protection of the 3,659 acres affected by the fire, while retaining the remainder of the 48,102 acre Red Butte Pasture available for livestock grazing through two growing seasons, would meet authorized annual livestock grazing authorizations.
3) Wildlife: The area of Rooster Comb Fire does not provide habitat for listed wildlife species. It provides habitat for a few special status species as listed in the EA.
4) T&E and Sensitive Species: The area of Rooster Comb Fire does not provide habitat for listed wildlife, aquatic, or plant species. It does include habitat of special status plant species as listed in the EA.
5) Cultural Resources: The area of Rooster Comb Fire does contain known cultural resources.
6) Watershed: Watershed stability was maintained by native perennial bunchgrass communities and soils with significant rock prior to the fire. Recovery of impacted perennial plants is important to retain watershed stability.
7) Invasive Species: Although the burned area did support some medusahead ryegrass, cheatgrass and other annual species, native perennial bunchgrass provided adequate competition to limit its dominance.
8) Other: None

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TREATMENTS

Due to the location of Rooster Comb Fire internal to established pastures, approximately eight miles of temporary fencing would be proposed to exclude livestock grazing from areas burned by the fire. The temporary fence would be built without vehicular access to the site and consistent with the Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) (USDI-BLM 1995). The burned and enclosed area would be closed to livestock grazing through July 15, 2005 and until monitoring indicates that desired residual perennial vegetation has recovered to levels that are adequate to support and protect upland function.

No seeding or planting of grass, forb, or shrub species is proposed as identified above. No repairs to permanent livestock management fence are required since the fire was internal to Red Butte Pasture.

Monitoring of the burn area would consist of livestock use supervision, vegetation monitoring and weed monitoring. Detected weeds would be controlled utilizing herbicide and mechanical methods in accordance with the EA and Decision Record for the Noxious Weed Control Program 1994-1998 (USDI/BLM 1994).

III. PURPOSE OF TREATMENTS

The area burned by Rooster Comb Fire is in need of protection from grazing impacts to ensure that these impacts do not occur long term. These long term objectives can be met by protecting residual native vegetation communities during a period necessary for recovery of health and vigor. Construction of temporary fencing to control grazing impacts to fire impacted vegetation resources is needed to minimize soil movement, preserve on-site productivity, reduce the invasion and increased dominance of undesirable flammable annual plants and to reduce the potential for increased dominance of existing noxious weeds.

PART 4. – INDIVIDUAL TREATMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Rooster Comb	**M738**	**30 acres**		
STABILIZATION				**YR 1**
S1	**Planning/Design Specifications**		**Units**	
		Personnel Services	**0.5WM**	**$2,500**
		Planning	**0.5WM**	**$2,500**
		Layout and Design		**$**
		GIS		**$**
		Aerial Photography		**$**
		Training		**$**
		Equipment		**$**
		Supplies/Material		**$**
		Travel		**$**
		Contract		**$**
	Funded in FY-03	**Total**	**1.0 WM**	**$5,000**
Funded in FY03 **S2**	**Drill Seeding**			
		Total	**-0-**	**$-0-**
S3	**Aerial Seeding**			
		Total	**-0-**	**$-0-**
S4	**Seedling Planting (Shrub/Tree)**			
		Total	**-0-**	**$-0-**
S5	**Noxious Weeds (Detection and Control)**			
		Labor		**$**
		Detection	**0.2 WM**	**$1,000**
		Treatment		**$**
		Monitoring		**$**
		Contract Administration		**$**
		Equipment		**$**
		Supplies		**$**
		Chemical		**$**
		Travel		**$**
		Contract		**$**
		Total	**0.2 WM**	**$1.000**
S6	**Protective Fence (Permanent/Temporary)**			
		Labor	**2.0 WM**	**$10,000**
		Layout and Design	**0.1 WM**	**$500**
		Contract Administration	**0.5 WM**	**$2,500**
		Clearances	**0.5 WM**	**$2,500**
		Equipment		

		Supplies		$16,000			
		Travel	0.1 WM	$500			
		Contract		$			
		Fence Removal		$			
		Total	8.0 miles	$32,000			
S7	Cattleguard						
		Total	-0-	$-0-			
S8	Herbicide Application						
		Total	-0-	$-0-			
S9	Soil Stabilization (erosion control)						
		Total	-0-	$-0-			
S10	Monitoring Year 1&2			YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	TOTALS
		Labor		$1500	$750	$750	$3000
		Equipment		$	$	$	$
		Supplies		$	$	$	$
		Travel		$500	$250	$250	$1000
		Contract		$	$	$	$
		Total		$2000	$1000	$1000	$4000
S11	Other						
		Total		$-0-			
STABILIZATION TOTAL				$40,000			

SPECIES LIST

Seed Name	Drill Seeding	Aerial Seeding	Seedling Planting	Total Pounds	Cost per lb	Total Costs
TOTALS						

PART 5. – MONITORING PLAN

Success of plan implementation and effectiveness would be monitored through the life of the emergency stabilization plan. Livestock use supervision would be completed for Red Butte Pasture through the year to ensure the annual livestock turn-out statement is implemented and the pasture is not grazed by livestock other than when scheduled. The proposed enclosure would be inspected periodically during scheduled livestock grazing use of Red Butte Pasture to ensure its integrity of excluding livestock grazing.

Monitoring of recovery of burned and protected native vegetation communities would be completed annually consistent with Vale Districts emergency stabilization and rehabilitation monitoring protocol established in 2003 as follows:

Monitoring: Success of Rehabilitation Seedings Following Wildfires

Prepared by Vale District BLM Fire Monitoring Team

1. **Objectives of monitoring**
   - Determine if the seeds that were planted as a result of wildfire rehabilitation came up
   - Determine if any large, perennial native grasses remain in the area (all perennial grass species except Sandberg bluegrass will be considered large).

2. **Method:**
   - determine number of transects across seeded area – minimum of one, no maximum per stratum; stratify as necessary by soil type, aspect, slope, overall assessment of success of seeding
   - determine number of paces between stops along transect
   - record the stratum and transects on the map; attach map to monitoring form
   - at each of 25 stops (plots), using a 3 foot diameter circular plot (take something,or build in crosshairs, to put the plot at least into quadrates for ease of reading) record the number of seeded species observed in plot as follows:
     1) grass seeded 0 seeded 1-5 seeded 6+ seeded
     2) forb seeded 0 seeded 1-5 seeded 6+ seeded
     3) existing grass 0 grass 1-5 grass 6+ grass
     4) or use any category you may need or wish to sample (e.g. second year seeded species, shrubs by category or by species, Sandberg bluegrass)
   - note any s eeded shrubs along transect that do not fall in transect
   - at a minimum, take a landscape photo of each transect

3. **Time**: All transects should be established/read after the seedlings have had a chance to establish, generally no earlier than the first of June, although this will be weather-dependent.

4. **What counts as seedling grass**: Any plant with three leaves or more.
5. **What counts as large, perennial grass**: any clump, regardless of number of subclumps, which was one original unit.

Monitoring of weed establishment and spread would be completed annually during the appropriate seasons for detection of whitetop, Russian knapweed, and other suspected noxious weeds. Search within the gridded fire boundary and well as search along access routs used during fire suppression would be completed. Documentation and treatment would be follow as appropriate.

PART 6. – COST/RISK ANALYSIS

Treatment (add all categories) Cost

Revegetation.....……. $-0-
Protection Fence Construction.....$32,000
All Other Costs.....…..... $10,000
TOTAL.....……..... $42,000

Probability of Stabilization Treatments Successfully Meeting Objectives (List all treatments)

Treatments	Units	NA	%
Revegetation (overall rating)		X	
Drill Seeding (acres)		X	
Aerial Seeding (acres)		X	
Transplant Seedlings (acres)		X	
Other		X	
Protective Fence to Exclude Grazing (miles)	8.0		95%
Fence Repair to Exclude Grazing (miles)		X	
Soil Watershed Structures (overall rating)		X	
Retention dams/structures (number)		X	
Ripping, contour furrows, etc.		X	
Matting, watershed cover, etc.		X	
Other-Clean Culverts		X	

COST RISK SUMMARY

The costs of the project and probability of success of the proposed treatments are compared with the risks to resource values if: 1) no action is taken, and 2) the proposed action is successfully implemented. Alternatives may be included in this analysis to assist in the selection of the treatments that will cost effectively achieve the ESR objectives. Answer the following questions to determine which proposed ESR treatments should be selected and implemented.

1. Are the risks to natural resources and private property **acceptable** as a result of the fire if the following actions are taken?

Proposed Action Yes |_X_| No |__| Rationale for answer: Protective fencing of approximately 3,659 acres burned by the fire will allow protection of fire impacted native bunchgrass communities while retaining a large pasture for grazing consistent with the current activity plan.

No Action Yes |_X_| No |__| Rationale for answer: The no action will protect fire impacted vegetation communities as will the proposed action, although will remove a significant portion of one livestock operator's anticipated annual available forage.

2. Is the probability of success of the proposed action, alternatives or no action acceptable given their costs?

Proposed Action Yes |_X_| No |__| Rationale for answer: With a minimal expense by the agency for installation of temporary fencing, there is a high probably that impacted native bunchgrass communities will recover to stabilize soils and exclude weed species long term.
No Action Yes |_X_| No |__| Rationale for answer: With no expense by the agency for installation of temporary fencing, there is a high probably that impacted native bunchgrass communities will recover to stabilize soils and exclude weed species long term.

3. Which approach will most cost-effectively and successfully attain the ESR objectives and therefore is recommended for implementation from a Cost/Risk Analysis standpoint?
Proposed Action |_X_|, or No Action |__|
Comments: Local political consequences of excluding livestock from a significant size pasture to protect 3,656 acres could shed a negative light on the agency.

RISK OF RESOURCE VALUE LOSS OR DAMAGE

Identify the risk (high, medium, low, none or not applicable (NA) of unacceptable impacts or loss of resources.

No Action-Treatments Not Implemented (check one)

Resource Value		None	Low	Medium	High
Unacceptable Loss of Topsoil			X		
Weed Invasion			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Diversity			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Structure			X		
Unacceptable Disruption of Ecological Processes			X		
Off-site Sediment Damage to Private Property			X		
Off-site Threats to Human Life		X			
Other- loss of Access Road Due to Plugged Culverts		X			

Proposed Action-Treatments Successfully Implemented (check one)

Resource Value		None	Low	Medium	High
Unacceptable Loss of Topsoil			X		
Weed Invasion			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Diversity			X		

Unacceptable Loss of Vegetation Structure			X		
Unacceptable Loss of Ecological Processes			X		
Off-site Sediment Damage to Private Property			X		
Off-site Threats to Human Life		X			
Other- Loss of Access Road Due to Plugged Culvert		X			

PART 7. - MAPS

Figure1 of EA-OR-030-03-024: Fire Perimeter, Colored Land Status Map, and Proposed Temporary Fencing for the Rooster Comb Fire (M738) ES Plan